

SPRING ISSUE

QUARTER 3, FY20

EDUCATION AND INCENTIVES NEWSLETTER

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URGENT ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Comprehensive overview of how COVID-19 impacts benefits
- Farewell to SFC Dahlblom as the Incentives NCOIC and welcome to SGT Weiderman to the Incentives Team!
- Follow us on Facebook:



<https://www.facebook.com/educationandincentives>

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If you have any questions about education benefits call 651-282-4589 or email us at: ng.mn.mnarnq.mbx.assets-education@mail.mil

Credentialing Assistance

CREDENTIALING ASSISTANCE



What Is It?

- The Army's Credentialing Assistance (CA) Program provides Soldiers with funding for more than 1,500 credentials listed on Army COOL: <https://www.cool.osd.mil/>.

How Do I Qualify?

- Complete AIT, WOBC or BOLC.
- Not be flagged.
- Have an active GoArmyEd (GAE) account (acceptable GAE holds: Tier, Civ. Ed, GPA, and Student Agreement).
- Be able to finish the training/exam prior to ETS or MRD.
- Officers (CW2, 2LT and above) incur a Military Service Obligation: AD/2 yrs; M-Day/4 yrs (MSOs do not apply to exams or recertification).

What Do I Get?

- CA provides up to \$4,000/per FY to complete as many credentials as desired.
- Soldiers may use both Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) and Credentialing Assistance (CA); however, the combined usage shall not exceed \$4,000 per FY.
- CA can be used for any credential listed on Army COOL: <https://www.cool.osd.mil/>.
- CA will pay expenses for classroom, hands-on, online/blended training and associated materials to include: manuals, study guides, textbooks, processing fees, test fees, related fees for continuing education requirements, and recertification of credentials.
- Soldiers may request reimbursement from VA using their GI Bill benefits to pay for exams only.
 - Important! Soldiers may only request reimbursement from VA if CA is not used to pay for the exam. The combined use of CA and VA benefits to pay for an exam is a duplication of benefits and is subject to recoupment.

What Are The Most Popular Certifications?

Associate Professional in HR (aPHR)
 Certified Logistics Technician (CLT)
 Certified Personal Trainer (CPT)
 Certified Welder (CW) Commercial
 Commercial Driver License (CDL)

Lean Six Sigma
 Project Mgmt Professional (PMP)
 Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
 Private Pilot, Airplane Single Engine
 CompTIA A+ CompTIA Security +ce

Credentialing Assistance

CREDENTIALING ASSISTANCE, CONT.



ARMY CREDENTIALING
ASSISTANCE

How Do I Apply?

- Contact your State Education office at 651-282-4589 to discuss the CA application process and verify eligibility.
- Ensure your credential is listed on Army Cool at: www.cool.osd.mil/
- If you don't have a GAE account, create an account at: www.goarmyed.com
 - ◊ When the GAE VIA decision tool launches:
 - ◊ Select **“Credential School”** and **“Credentialing Pathway”** degree program to pursue a credential program.
- Check the listed of approved training providers on GAE or select your own.
- Open a helpdesk case in GAE to retrieve the Credential Plan and Statement of Understanding (SOU).
- Electronically sign the SOU and upload all completed documents to a helpdesk case in GAE and check back for status updates.
- Soldiers can pursue multiple credentials simultaneously, but each request must be submitted a minimum of 10 business days apart.
- Your local education office will review the documents for completion and escalate it to ACCESS AU for payment and approval.
- Important! CA is paid up front. Soldiers will NOT be reimbursed for any payments made to the training provider.
- ACCESS AU will notify Soldiers directly if approved/disapproved.
- All CA requests must be submitted no later than **30 business days** (45 calendar days), prior to course start date, no exceptions.
- Step-by-Step instructions are available for each of these directions, contact your ESO/ESS for more information/assistance.

Where Can I Go For Testing?

- Testing locations vary based on the exam. Check with your credentialing agency to find out where they offer testing.
- There are two major companies that offer certification and licensure exams. You can find local test centers on their websites:
 - ◊ Pearson VUE: <https://home.pearsonvue.com/>
 - ◊ Prometric: <https://www.prometric.com/en-us/Pages/home.aspx>

For More Information:

Go to Army Cool: www.cool.osd.mil/
 Apply On Line: www.goarmyed.com
 Contact your ESO: www.nationalguard.com/select-your-state
 Visit Us Online: www.nationalguard.com/education

COVID-19 IMPACTS ON FEDERAL TA



Are you using Federal Tuition Assistance for Spring Term?

In this rapidly changing environment, it is important to the Education Office to support our Soldiers in every way possible. For many, the virus arrived as Soldiers and campuses were preparing for spring break. After break, many of you were not allowed to return to campus and classes. Courses have been moved online, rescheduled and or even cancelled, and some campuses are changing their grading procedures. Below are some steps you can take to help minimize the negative impact of our current environment on your education:

If your class is cancelled, ACCESS Army University will waive any withdrawal TA debt you may incur and/or assist you with rescheduling a postponed TA-funded class in GoArmyEd through the steps listed below.

If your college cancels your class(es):

1. Drop your class(es) in GoArmyEd, using the “military withdrawal” type.
2. Submit a Helpdesk case requesting an approval of your military withdrawal request due to class cancellation.
3. Attach verification from your school that your class was cancelled. Your military withdrawal request cannot be approved without this verification.
4. You are not required to submit a completed/signed DA 7793 if you are requesting a military withdrawal due to coronavirus-related class cancellation.

If your college changes the start and end dates of your class(es):

1. Submit a Helpdesk case requesting new start and end dates for your class(es). This can only be done for a class that is currently TA-funded.
2. Attach verification from your school of the new start and end dates. Your class dates will not be updated without this verification.

If you are unable to complete a TA-funded class during the coronavirus outbreak for a reason other than those listed above, please submit a GoArmyEd helpdesk case for assistance.

If you have questions about benefits, eligibility, or application processes, please contact the MN ARNG Education Services office: 651-282-4589

COVID-19 IMPACTS ON FEDERAL GI BILL PROGRAMS



NEW LAW PASSED FOR GI BILL RELIEF

On March 21, 2020, Senate Bill 3503 was signed into law. This bill was passed to lessen the impact of the COVID-19 school shutdowns on students using GI Bill program benefits. The law only authorizes special authorizes to the VA from March 1, 2020, to December 21, 2020.

We have received multiple questions regarding how it will impact GI Bill benefits, specifically the Chapter 33, Post 9/11 GI Bill housing allowance. The good news is most students WILL NOT see a change in their benefits and should continue to receive payments as normally scheduled.

What does this mean to you? The answer depends on the type of action taken by the school, the timing of the action, and how the current program is approved.

SCHOOL SHUTDOWNS AND MOVING ONLINE

If your school temporarily closes because of an emergency situation, VA may continue benefit payments (including the Monthly Housing Allowance under the Post-9/11 GI Bill) for up to 4 weeks during a 12-month period.

If your school remains open (virtually, rather than physically), and you are now taking online classes, then your benefit payments will be impacted as follows:

If the change from training in-residence to online classes happens during the term, and your program has been approved by the State Approving Agency for delivery through an online modality, your benefit payments will remain the same for the rest of the term.

For any future terms that were offered in residence but are now online, and your school has been approved for online training, your housing allowance will remain the same until new classes start after 21 December 2020.

OTHER SITUATIONS??

The most important thing you need to know is if your program has not been approved by the State Approving Agency for an online modality, all of your education benefit payments will stop when you begin your training online. Your school's VA certifying official will be able to verify if your school has been approved for online training.

In the event of a national emergency, Soldiers activated to Title 10 service under 502(f) may possibly be eligible for Chapter 33 GI Bill benefits if their orders extend beyond 90 days.

If you have any individual questions regarding how these changes will impact your GI Bill Payments please contact the VA at 1-888-442-4551. Specific situation guidance may be found in here- https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/docs/presentations/SCO_Webinar_03_26_2020.pdf

COVID-19 IMPACTS ON STATE INCENTIVES PROGRAMS

State Tuition Reimbursement (STR)

- Members will be able to submit for STR even if they have lapsed on their APFT or HT/WT after 1MARCH2020 until MNNG resumes APFT and HT/WT testing.
- Members who have failed a for-record APFT or HT/WT, or lapsed prior to 1MARCH2020 will NOT be eligible for reimbursement for the Spring 2020 Semester. Members who do not have an opportunity to re-take a APFT or HT/WT must contact the Education Office about a possible ETP for future semesters.

State Reenlistment and Enlistment Bonus

- Members will receive their annual bonus payments even if they have lapsed on APFT or HT/WT after 1MARCH2020 until MNNG resumes APFT and HT/WT testing.
- Members who have failed a for-record APFT, or HT/WT, or lapsed prior to 1MARCH20 will have their bonuses prorated and terminated in accordance with their Bonus Addendum termination clause.

State Reclassification Bonus

- Members who become MOSQ and are eligible for payment may still receive payment OR who are still within their 3 year service obligation will not face recoupment if; they have lapsed on APFT or HT/WT after 1MARCH2020 until MNNG resumes APFT and HT/WT testing.
- More than 4 excused absences in a calendar year may be eligible for an ETP ONLY if the absences are directly related to COVID-19. Members must speak with their units about requesting this ETP

State Medic Bonus

- New medic bonus contracts are extended from 30JUNE2020 submission deadline to 1SEP2020 submission.
- Members will receive their annual bonus payments even if they have lapsed on APFT or HT/WT after 1MARCH2020 until MNNG resumes APFT and HT/WT testing.
- Members who have failed a for-record APFT, or HT/WT, or lapsed prior to 1MARCH20 will have their bonuses prorated and terminated in accordance with their Bonus Addendum termination clause.

COVID-19 IMPACTS ON FEDERAL INCENTIVES PROGRAMS

Enlistment, Reenlistment, Officer Bonuses, and Student Loan Repayment (SLRP)

The considerations below may hinder the ability of a Soldier or officer to retain their current Federal Incentive:

- Soldiers who were transferred due to reorganization, transition, or relocation have 24 months to become DMOSQ. If they are close to the end of the 24 months and their MOSQ School was cancelled due to COVID-19.
- Warrant Officer/Officers are required to complete BOLC/WOBC within 24 months of commissioning date. If they are coming close to that 24 month window and were cancelled out of their required PME class due to COVID-19.
- Soldiers with a 09S SLRP are required to begin their Officer producing program within 1 year of date of enlistment. If the Officer producing program was cancelled due to COVID-19.

The incentives office is still waiting for guidance from NGB on a way forward. If these situations arise, ensure to communicate with your unit full time staff or your retention NCO. They will contact the state incentives office for guidance.

The considerations below will NOT hinder the ability of a Soldier or officer to retain their incentive:

- A Soldier/officer will retain their federal incentive even if their current APFT expires.
- A Soldier/officer will retain their federal incentive even if their current HT/WT expires.
- A Soldier/officer will retain their federal incentive even if they are coded as 'Excused Absence'. The only pay code that affects Soldier's Federal Incentives is AWOL (U).

NOTE: To become eligible for the federal reenlistment bonus, a Soldier must have a passing APFT/HTWT prior to completing an extension and bonus contract. Due to drill weekends primarily being virtual training, Soldiers must communicate with their full time staff and request to take an APFT/HTWT during the week before extending for a bonus. It is highly recommended that unit Commanders allow Soldier to come in on their own time to take these tests to fulfill this requirement.

STATE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAMS MEDICAL PROFESSION & SPOUSE STR

Do you want to become a doctor or dentist for the MNNG?

- ♦ Medical Professional Student STR will fund up to 100% Tuition Reimbursement!
- ♦ Contractual service obligation to the MNNG equals two years of service for every one year of use of the program.
- ♦ Encouraging currently accepted/enrolled medical and dental school students to accept a direct commission in the MNNG during completion of graduate-level medical or dental professional degrees.
- ♦ Army and Air National Guard members who initially appoint as medical/dental student officers or who are already commissioned officers are eligible for this program.
- ♦ Participation in this program does not prohibit concurrent participation in a federally funded health professional incentive program.

Did you know your spouse may be eligible to use your STR benefit?

Service members who meet the following criteria may opt to have their spouse use a portion of their remaining balance of their STR benefit:

- ◇ Are serving satisfactorily
- ◇ Have at least 8 years of active drilling service in the MN ARNG
- ◇ Are between the ranks of E-1 thru O5

Spouses may use up to 12 semester credits annually, not to exceed the members lifetime benefit of 144 semester credits.

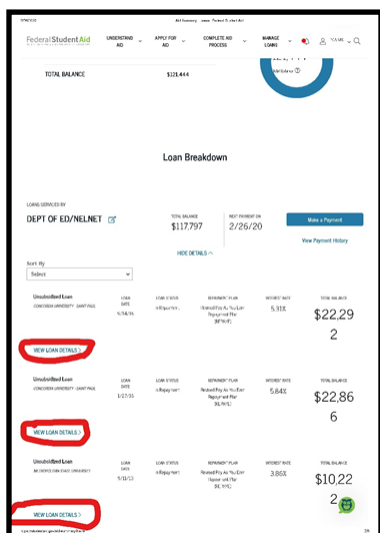
Student Loan Repayment Program

The NSLDS website has changed.

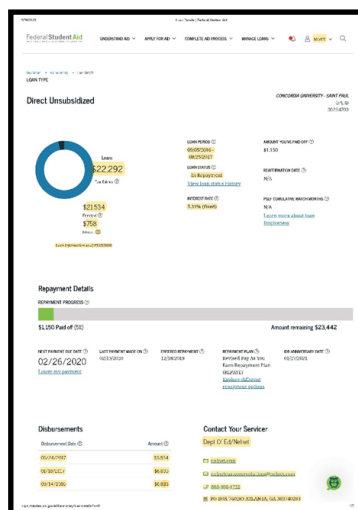
<https://studentaid.gov/>

There are three documents you'll need from the NSLDS Site:

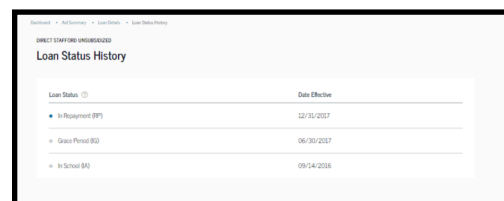
The Loan Summary



The Loan Details



The Loan History



- All Loans must be submitted with your payment request (including any loans with a zero balance).
- Submit your NSLDS request no earlier than 30 days before your anniversary date.
- **Sign your DD 2475 with your CAC!!!**

Contact the SLRP Manager with Additional Questions:

Education inbox: ng.mn.mnarng.mbx.assets-education@mail.mil

Contact: Mr. Joseph Papp 651-282-4197 or joseph.m.papp2.civ@mail.mil

\$20K LUMP SUM BONUS HOW DO YOU QUALIFY??

Eligibility:

- Grades E-3 thru E-7
- Less than eight (8) years and one (1) day time in service on contract start date
- Extend for six (6) years
- Have an ETS date no later than 30 September 2020
- Meet all other REB eligibility in accordance with the FY20 SRIP Policy.
- Policy Expires on **1 October 2020** unless rescinded before



CURRENT COLLEGE STUDENTS ACTIVATED FOR COVID-19 RESPONSE

While answering your communities' call, you may be concerned about how to balance your college schedule along with your duties. Your #1 priority is to focus on completing your mission. To assist you with that task, several special protections have been granted to Minnesota National Guard Service Members. Some protections are based in Minnesota state law or public school policy and may not apply to Soldiers living/attending school out of state or in some private and online programs. While you may be eligible for legal protections, most students will never need to rely on them. Schools are generally flexible and understating of your situation as long as you let them know as soon as possible. Please review the information below and complete the appropriate tasks based on your situation.

First: Contact all your instructors directly and let them know that you have been activated for a state or federal mission in response to COVID-19. Do this today! Let them know via email so you meet the requirement of providing written notification to your school. You do not need to make a decision yet, but you need to let them know of the situation and many times we have seen this increase flexibility in matters such as project deadlines.

Second: Realistically assess your options regarding available time, technological limitations, and mental state. Remember your first duty is accomplishment of your mission, and staying up all night to complete homework you couldn't do during the day leaves you too exhausted to perform well. Time crunches and deadlines are going to be your greatest challenges when considering what options to take. Activation may require you to move to a remote site which does not have all the technological capabilities required for distance learning. Will you have access to internet, a printer, and other required resources? What other factors may interfere with your learning?

Third: Know your rights, and responsibilities as a Service Member called to Active Duty. Individuals are protected by Minnesota State Statute 192.502. Students attending Minnesota Public schools in the Minnesota State System (most all public schools other than the U of M) are governed by the protections in Minnesota State Procedure 5.12.1 – "Military Service and Veterans with Disabilities" These protections apply to Service Members called to emergency active duty response and deployments. They do not apply to weekend drills, annual training or other scheduled events.

There are 3 options you have going forward.

You may continue your studies or,

You may request an incomplete grade and finish your work upon return from active duty or,

You may withdraw from your courses.

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CURRENT COLLEGE STUDENTS ACTIVATED FOR COVID-19 RESPONSE, CONT.

If you chose to continue to complete the course for full credit as normal: Class sessions the student misses due to performance of active military service or due to the person's medical treatment or medical condition must be counted as excused absences and must not be used in any way to adversely impact the student's grade or standing in the class. Any student who selects this option is not, however, automatically excused from completing assignments due during the period the student is performing active military service or receiving medical treatment or recovering from a medical condition. A letter grade or a grade of pass must be awarded only if, in the opinion of the faculty member teaching the course, the student has completed sufficient work and has demonstrated sufficient progress toward meeting course requirements to justify the grade.

If you request to be given a grade of incomplete: You will be allowed to complete the course upon release from active service, upon completion of medical treatment, or upon sufficient medical recovery under the postsecondary institution's standard practice for completion of incompletes. (Under federal financial aid policies, a course that is retaken under these conditions cannot be counted toward a student's enrollment load. This impacts GI Bill eligibility.)

If you request to withdraw from your courses: The tuition and fees must be credited to the person's account at the postsecondary institution. Any refunds are subject to the requirements of the state or federal financial aid programs of origination. In such a case, the student must not receive credit for the courses and must not receive a failing grade, an incomplete, or other negative annotation on the student's record, and the student's grade point average must not be altered or affected in any manner because of action. If the student chooses to withdraw, the student has the right to be readmitted and reenrolled as a student at the postsecondary education institution, without penalty or redetermination of admission eligibility, within two years following release from the state or federal active military service or following completion of medical treatment or sufficient recovery from the person's medical condition. If you select this option you need to inform your instructor, your school's VA certifying official and

The protections in this section MUST be invoked as follows:

The qualified person or qualified student, must give advance verbal or written notice that the person is being ordered to active military service or will be undertaking medical treatment or a period of recovery for a medical condition. (Advanced notice is not required if the giving of notice is precluded by military or medical necessity or, under all the relevant circumstances, the giving of notice is impossible or unreasonable.) **–Unless you are stuck by illness or activated without notice YOU MUST PROVIDE WRITTEN NOTICE TO THE SCHOOL BEFORE YOUR DUTY STARTS.**

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CURRENT COLLEGE STUDENTS ACTIVATED FOR COVID-19 RESPONSE, CONT.

Upon written request from the postsecondary institution, the person must provide written verification of the order to active service or of the existence of the medical condition or medical treatment. ***–If you elect to take an incomplete or withdraw, YOU MUST PROVIDE COPIES OF YOUR ORDERS TO THE SCHOOL. (Be aware, creation of fraudulent orders is ILLEGAL and will result in UCMJ action and repercussions from your school.)***

(This provides minimum protections for qualified students. Nothing prevents postsecondary institutions from providing additional options or protections to students who are ordered to active military service or are undertaking medical treatment or a period of recovery from a medical condition. Most schools in the state of Minnesota are excellent and will be flexible to assist you in completing your mission)

Finally, you must decide what option to take. Remember, most of you are more than half-way completed with the term. Abandoning the work you have completed thus far is an extreme decision and should not be taken lightly. We recommend letting your chain of command know that you are a college student, they may be able to assist you in completing your courses while on active duty. However, this is non-binding and Commanders may require your full attention to complete the mission. This is your priority and a responsibility you agreed to by joining the National Guard.

The MNARNG Education Services Office can assist and provide counseling regarding your options and how to proceed forward. We can also give guidance on how your decisions may impact your eligibility with various military education benefit programs. We have partners in the Minnesota Higher Education Vets Program who work directly with your schools and likely can tell you who you exactly need to speak with at each campus to invoke your protections. While 99% of students never run into issues as long as they provide advanced written notice to their instructors, occasionally they do. If you run into issues with any of your schools or instructors that are not complying with these policies, please let our office know. Please do not argue with your instructors. We can contact our partners in administration and have them reach out to these individuals and explain what protections are afforded to you.

Please forward any questions to the MNARNG Education Services Office.

Email: nq.mn.mnarng.mbx.assets-education@mail.mil

Hotline: (651) 282-4589

MN State Statute 192.502 Protections: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/192.502>

Minnesota State Schools Policy: <https://www.minnstate.edu/board/procedure/512p1.html>